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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0384  
INFO RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 3624  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 9244  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 4219  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE 9295  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 3965  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 2205  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 0703  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000482

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DEPT FOR SA/INS  
NSC FOR RICHELSOPH

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TAGS: PGOV PTER NP

SUBJECT: KING ATTEMPTS TO REACH OUT IN HIS DEMOCRACY DAY SPEECH, BUT IS IT ENOUGH?

REF: KATHMANDU 481

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty, Reasons, 1.4 (b/d).

Call to Political Parties for a "New Chapter of Understanding"

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**¶11. (U)** In his message to the nation on Nepal's Democracy Day, February 19, King Gyanendra apparently attempted to reach out to the political parties. He called "on all willing political parties to come forth to fully activate, at the earliest, the stalled democratic process in the greater interest of the nation. Let us listen to others, put across our views, do away with discord and enhance mutual understanding; let us consolidate peace and democracy." For the aspirations of peace and democracy, he sought "solidarity amongst all those who have faith in multiparty democracy." He stated that democracy could be "reenergized with the activation of all representative bodies through the electoral process." He also commended those who had participated in the municipal elections, which he hailed as "the victory of democracy." The King also once again appealed to the Maoists - "those who have been misguided" - to enter mainstream politics. In addition, he reminded people that "democracy will be secure only when the rule of law is upheld and the Constitution alone forms the basis of rule of law." (See para. 5 for complete text.)

Parties: King's Message "Ambiguous" and "Vague"

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**¶12. (C)** Political party leaders acknowledged to us privately that the King had created some "space" for dialogue in his remarks, which was worth exploring. Publicly, however, they have taken a more critical stance and termed the King's message "ambiguous." (Note: The Kantipur Group's English-language daily, "The Kathmandu Post," has been much more strident in its criticism of the King's remarks than the Indian-backed English-language "The Himalayan Times" and the Times' sister publication the vernacular Annapurna Post. End Note.) CPN-UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, whose house arrest was extended another 90 days, told "The Kathmandu Post" that the King's call was "vague" and "an

attempt to legitimize his authoritarian rule." He asserted that the King was trying "to hoodwink the international community" by talking about negotiations.

¶3. (U) Some party activists claimed that the King remained steadfast in sticking to his "roadmap" of elections; they interpreted his call to "willing parties" to be aimed at those royalist parties that had participated in the municipal elections. However, Pradip Gyawali, CPN-UML Central Committee member, gave some conditions for talks with the King: the King should be ready to restore the political situation to before October 2, 2002 (when the King dismissed the last elected government) and to hold elections to a constituent assembly. The seven-party alliance stated publicly that it remained committed to its 12-point understanding with the Maoists and indicated that the King needed to accept that before the Parties would be prepared to talk.

Comment

¶4. (C) The King's remarks cracked open the door to some degree, but whether it will be enough to allow the Parties to enter into a dialogue remains in question. The Parties' commitment to their 12-point understanding is becoming more difficult to sustain in the face of continued Maoist violence, especially given the growing concern by the international community (reftel).

Text of King's February 19 Democracy Day Message

¶5. (U) Complete text as reprinted in the government-owned English-language daily "The Rising Nepal":

Beloved Countrymen,

As we celebrate the 56th National Democracy Day today, we pay homage to our august grandfather His late Majesty King Tribhuvan and all the brave souls who laid down their lives for the cause of democracy.

To ensure that an exercise in democracy is meaningful and sustainable, the people's right to elect representatives of their choice must be recognised as sacrosanct. The Nepalese people have demonstrated their faith in the power of the ballot during the recently held municipal elections. In spite of the apparently adverse environment, the courage shown by them is indeed commendable. The commitment of the people has led to the victory of democracy. The Nepalese people have been encouraged by this success to install all representative bodies through election and sustainable peace.

Peace and democracy are the aspirations of all. The nation, therefore, seeks solidarity amongst all who have faith in multiparty democracy. This solidarity must be achieved at the earliest so as to formulate a mechanism which ensures that peace and democracy are never again jeopardised. In the coming days as well, democracy can be reenergised with the activation of all representative bodies through the electoral process. Our continued interaction with the people has led us to believe that the time has come for all those who believe in these ideals to chart a course ahead, with the welfare of the nation uppermost. We, therefore, call on all willing political parties to come forth to fully activate, at the earliest, the stalled democratic process in the greater interest of the nation. Let us listen to others, put across our views, do away with discord and enhance mutual understanding; let us consolidate peace and democracy.

Inspired by our glorious tradition of patriotism, those who have been misguided should, without further delay, enter the mainstream of peace and multiparty democracy, eschewing the path of violence and destruction.

We are committed to upholding and safeguarding the

Constitution in the greater interest and progress of the Nepalese people. It will do well to remember that democracy will be secure only when the rule of law is upheld and the Constitution alone forms the basis of rule of law.

May this day inspire us to activate a democratic process dedicated to sustainable peace and welfare of the country as well as initiate a new chapter of understanding amongst us all. May those who sacrificed their lives to usher in democracy and all those who place the dignity and glory of the nation above all else inspire us in achieving these noble objectives.

May Lord Pashupatinath bless us all !

Jaya Nepal !

End Text.  
MORIARTY